1874. d 33

AN EPISTLE:

ADDREST TO

Sir *THOMAS HANMER*,

On his EDITION of

Shakespear's WORKS.

THE SECOND EDITION.

To which is added,

A SONG from the *Cymbeline* of the same AUTHOR.

By Mr. WILLIAM COLLINS, of *Magdalene*-College in OXFORD.

LONDON:

Printed for R. DODSLEY, at *Tully's* Head in *Pall-mall*, and M. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-noster-Row*.

M. DCC. XLIV.

(Price One Shilling.)

81

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TO
Sir *Thomas Hanmer*.

SIR

WHILE born to bring the Muſe's happier Days,
A Patriot's Hand protects a Poet's Lays:
While nurſt by you ſhe ſees her Myrtles bloom,
Green and unwither'd o'er his honour'd Tomb:
Excuſe her Doubts, if yet ſhe fears to tell
What ſecret Tranſports in her Boſom ſwell:
With conſcious Awe ſhe hears the Critic's Fame,
And bluſhing hides her Wreath at *Shakeſpear*'s Name.

Hard was the Lot thoſe injur'd Strains endur'd,
Unveil'd by Silence, and by Years obſcur'd:
Fair Fancy wept; and echoing Sighs conſeſt
A fixt Deſpair in ev'ry tuneful Breaſt.

Not with more Grief th' afflicted Swains appear
When wintry Winds deform the plenteous Year:
When ling'ring Froſts the ruin'd Seats invade
Where Peace reſorted, and the Graces play'd.

Each riſing Art by juſt Gradation moves,
Toil builds on Toil, and Age on Age improves.
The Muſe alone unequal dealt her Rage,
And grac'd with nobleſt Pomp her earlieſt Stage.
Preſerv'd thro' Time, the ſpeaking Scenes impart
Each changeful Wiſh of *Phædra*'s tortur'd Heart:
Or paint the Curſe, that mark'd the * *Theban*'s Reign,
A Bed inceſtuous, and a Father ſlain.
With kind Concern our pitying Eyes o'erflow,
Trace the ſad Tale, and own another's Woe.

To

* The *Oedipus* of *Sophocles*.

To *Rome* remov'd, with Wit ſecure to pleaſe,
The *Comic* Siſters kept their native Eaſe.
With jealous Fear declining *Greece* beheld
Her own *Menander*'s Art almoſt excell'd!
But ev'ry Muſe eſſay'd to raiſe in vain
Some labour'd Rival of her *Tragic* Strain;
Iliſſus' Laurels, tho' transferr'd with Toil,
Droop'd their fair Leaves, nor knew th'unfriendly Soil.

As Arts expir'd, reſiſtleſs Dulneſs roſe;
Goths, *Prieſts*, or *Vandals*,---all were Learning's Foes.
Till * *Julius* firſt recall'd each exil'd Maid,
And *Coſmo* own'd them in th'*Etrurian* Shade:
Then deeply ſkill'd in Love's engaging Theme,
The ſoft *Provencial* paſt to *Arno*'s Stream:
With graceful Eaſe the wanton Lyre he ſtrung,
Sweet flow'd the Lays---- but Love was all he ſung.

* *Julius* the Second, the immediate Predeceſſor of *Leo* the Tenth.

The gay Deſcription could not fail to move;
For, led by Nature, all are Friends to Love.

But Heav'n, ſtill various in its Works, decreed
The perfect Boaſt of Time ſhould laſt ſucceed.
The beauteous Union muſt appear at length,
Of *Tuſcan* Fancy, and *Athenian* Strength:
One greater Muſe *Eliza*'s Reign adorn,
And ev'n a *Shakeſpear* to her Fame be born!

Yet ah! ſo bright her Morning's op'ning Ray,
In vain our *Britain* hop'd an equal Day!
No ſecond Growth the Weſtern Iſle could bear,
At once exhauſted with too rich a Year.
Too nicely *Johnſon* knew the Critic's Part;
Nature in him was almoſt loſt in Art.
Of ſofter Mold the gentle *Fletcher* came,
The next in Order, as the next in Name.
With pleas'd Attention 'midſt his Scenes we find
Each glowing Thought, that warms the Female Mind;

Each

Each melting Sigh, and ev'ry tender Tear,
The Lover's Wiſhes and the Virgin's Fear.
His ‡ ev'ry Strain the *Smiles* and *Graces* own;
But ſtronger *Shakeſpear* felt for *Man* alone:
Drawn by his Pen, our ruder Paſſions ſtand
Th' unrival'd Picture of his early Hand.

† With gradual Steps, and ſlow, exacter *Frame*
Saw Art's fair Empire o'er her Shores advance:
By length of Toil, a bright Perfection knew,
Correctly bold, and juſt in all ſhe drew.
Till late *Corneille*, with * *Lucan*'s ſpirit fir'd,
Breath'd the free Strain, as *Rome* and He inſpir'd:
And claſſic Judgment gain'd to ſweet *Racine*
The temp'rate Strength of *Maro's* chaſter Line.

But

‡ Their Characters are thus diſtinguiſh'd by Mr. *Dryden*.

† About the Time of *Shakeſpear*, the Poet *Hardy* was in great Repute in *France*. He wrote, according to *Fontenelle*, ſix hundred Plays. The *French* Poets after him applied themſelves in general to the correct Improvement of the Stage, which was almoſt totally diſregarded by thoſe of our own Country, *Johnſon* excepted.

* The favourite Author of the Elder *Corneille*.

But wilder far the *Britiſh* Laurel ſpread,
And Wreaths leſs artful crown our Poet's Head.
Yet He alone to ev'ry Scene could give
Th' Hiſtorian's Truth, and bid the Manners live.
Wak'd at his Call I view, with glad Surprize,
Majeſtic Forms of mighty Monarchs riſe.
There *Henry*'s Trumpets ſpread their loud Alarms,
And laurel'd Conqueſt waits her Hero's Arms.
Here gentler *Edward* claims a pitying Sigh,
Scarce born to Honours, and ſo ſoon to die!
Yet ſhall thy Throne, unhappy Infant, bring
No Beam of Comfort to the guilty King?
The ‡ Time ſhall come, when *Glo'ſter*'s Heart ſhall bleed
In Life's laſt Hours, with Horror of the Deed:
When dreary Viſions ſhall at laſt preſent
Thy vengeful Image, in the midnight Tent:
Thy Hand unſeen the ſecret Death ſhall bear,
Blunt the weak Sword, and break th' oppreſſive Spear.

Where'er

‡ Tempus erit Turno, magno cum optaverit emptum
Intactum Pallanta, *&c.*

Where'er we turn, by Fancy charm'd, we find
Some ſweet Illuſion of the cheated Mind.
Oft, wild of Wing, ſhe calls the Soul to rove
With humbler Nature, in the rural Grove;
Where Swains contented own the quiet Scene,
And twilight Fairies tread the circled Green:
Dreſt by her Hand, the Woods and Vallies ſmile,
And Spring diffuſive decks th' *enchanted Iſle*.

O more than all in pow'rful Genius bleſt,
Come, take thine Empire o'er the willing Breaſt!
Whate'er the Wounds this youthful Heart ſhall feel,
Thy Songs ſupport me, and thy Morals heal!
There ev'ry Thought the Poet's Warmth may raiſe,
There native Muſic dwells in all the Lays.
O might ſome Verſe with happieſt Skill perſuade
Expreſſive Picture to adopt thine Aid!
What wond'rous Draughts might riſe from ev'ry Page!
What other *Raphaels* Charm a diſtant Age!

Methinks ev'n now I view ſome free Deſign,
Where breathing Nature lives in ev'ry Line:
Chaſt and ſubdu'd the modeſt Lights decay,
Steal into Shade, and mildly melt away.
---And ſee, where † *Anthony* in Tears approv'd,
Guards the pale Relicks of the Chief he lov'd:
O'er the cold Corſe the Warrior ſeems to bend,
Deep ſunk in Grief, and mourns his murther'd Friend!
Still as they preſs, he calls on all around,
Lifts the torn Robe, and points the bleeding Wound.

But ‡ who is he, whoſe Brows exalted bear
A Wrath impatient, and a fiercer Air?
Awake to all that injur'd Worth can feel,
On his own *Rome* he turns th' avenging Steel.
Yet ſhall not War's inſatiate Fury fall,
(So Heav'n ordains it) on the deſtin'd Wall.

† See the Tragedy of *Julius Cæſar*.
‡ *Coriolanus*. See Mr. *Spence*'s Dialogues on the *Odyſſey*.

See

See the fond Mother 'midſt the plaintive Train,
Hung on his Knees, and proſtrate on the Plain!
Touch'd to the Soul, in vain he ſtrives to hide
The Son's Affection, in the *Roman's* Pride!
O'er all the Man conflicting Paſſions riſe,
Rage graſps the Sword, while *Pity* melts the Eyes.

Thus, gen'rous Critic, as thy Bard inſpires,
The Siſter Arts ſhall nurſe their drooping Fires;
Each from his Scenes her Stores alternate bring,
Blend the fair Tints, or wake the vocal String:
Thoſe *Sibyl*-Leaves, the Sport of ev'ry Wind,
(For Poets ever were a careleſs Kind)
By thee diſpos'd, no farther Toil demand,
But, juſt to Nature, own thy forming Hand.

So ſpread o'er *Greece*, th' harmonious Whole unknown,
Ev'n *Homer*'s Numbers charm'd by Parts alone.
Their own *Ulyſſes* ſcarce had wander'd more,
By Winds and Water caſt on ev'ry Shore:

When,

When, rais'd by Fate, some former *Haumer* join'd
Each beauteous Image of the boundless Mind:
And bad, like Thee, his *Athens* ever claim,
A fond Alliance with the Poet's Name.

A SONG

A

SONG

FROM

Shakespear's CYMBELYNE.

Sung by GUIDERUS *and* ARVIRAGUS *over* FIDELE, *suppos'd to be Dead.*

See page 278 of the 7th Vol. of THEOBALD's *Edition of* SHAKESPEAR.

I.

TO fair FIDELE's grassy Tomb
Soft Maids, and Village Hinds shall bring
Each op'ning Sweet, of earliest Bloom,
And rifle all the breathing Spring.

II.

No wailing Ghoſt ſhall dare appear
To vex with Shrieks this quiet Grove:
But Shepherd Lads aſſemble here,
And melting Virgins own their Love.

III.

No wither'd Witch ſhall here be ſeen,
No Goblins lead their nightly Crew:
The Female Fays ſhall haunt the Green,
And dreſs thy Grave with pearly Dew!

IV.

The Redbreaſt oft at Ev'ning Hours
Shall kindly lend his little Aid:
With hoary Moſs, and gather'd Flow'rs,
To deck the Ground where thou art laid.

V.

When howling Winds, and beating Rain,
In Tempeſts ſhake the ſylvan Cell:
Or midſt the Chace on ev'ry Plain,
The tender Thought on thee ſhall dwell.

VI.

Each lonely Scene ſhall thee reſtore,
For thee the Tear be duly ſhed:
Belov'd, till Life could charm no more;
And mourn'd, till Pity's ſelf be dead.

F I N I S.

V.

When howling Winds, and beating Rain,
In Tempests shake the sylvan Cell :
Or midst the Chace on every Plain,
The tender Thought on thee shall dwell.

VI.

Each lonely Scene shall thee restore,
For thee the Tear be duly shed :
Belov'd, till Life could charm no more ;
And mourn'd, till Pity's self be dead.

FINIS.

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